2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

793 Everest, which has been several times visited on the way to
515 the mountain. The nuns were indescribably dirty, and their
faces caked with soot. They were dressed in maroon, in robes
292 similar to those worn by Lamas. Their heads were com-
302 pletely shaved; but to protect them against the cold, which was severe at nearly all times of the year, they wore huge yak's-hair wigs, shaped like the hats worn by Chinese mandarins, which gave them an almost grotesque appearance. The first time we visited the place, in 1922, the nuns turned out in force to inspect us, but they were far too shy to converse, even through our Tibetan interpreter, and contented themselves with a giggle. Most, if not all, of them were, so far as I remember, completely illiterate.

"Nuns are admitted to a few monasteries in Sikkim," notes Waddell, "but their number is extremely small, and individually they are illiterate." I doubt whether the Inebus of Lingtem could properly be classed as nuns at all. Most of them have had no real training and not one of them can read or write. They do not perform ceremonies for private individuals; nor are they given a place inside the main hall at monastic services, being regarded as scarcely different from ordinary women. Their devotions are confined almost entirely to the turning of prayer-wheels and drums, circumambulation of the monastery building, and telling their beads. The small Hla-gong, which houses the three big prayer-drums, is really their private chapel, and to this they have access at all times. They usually came to the monastery thrice each month, spent a few hours turning the drums, while they sang in unison, and then went away again. Whenever their visit coincided with some ceremony performed by the men we noticed that the attendance was markedly greater.

788 Most Inebus wear a rosary round their necks or carry it
● 793 twined around the wrist. There is no other mark by which
793 they may be recognised. I told one old woman that in Tibet
834 I had noticed that nuns were always shaven, and asked her why the same custom was not adopted here, since the Lamas

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 12

Religious Ceremonies

21st March:

DURING most of last night sleep was impossible owing to the musical preparations for to-day's celebrations. A number of Lamas arrived during the evening, and at about nine, just when we had gone to bed, started to make the night horrible with the banging of drums and cymbals and blaring of trumpets. Having been used for the greater part of my life to hearing the bagpipes played in a small closed room I thought I was inured to this sort of thing; but this noise is really too much to be borne with equanimity. Heard at a distance, when it comes reverberating over the hills, this monastic music can sometimes sound extremely beautiful, especially on a cloudy moonlight night: but at close quarters it is a meaningless cacophony, and sounds like a symphony by one of Hindemith's less inspired followers; but to imagine the effect one must think of a powerful wireless turned on at full blast in a very small room, with every door and window closed.

At about eight o'clock this morning people started to arrive, and others continued to turn up throughout the day, until by evening nearly a hundred men, women and children were present. Most of them sat about outside the building, eating and drinking almost continuously, and nobody seemed to take the slightest interest in the service which was going on inside the monastery. The necessary food and drink for these fortnightly gatherings are provided by two households at a time, the turn coming round about once in every ten months. The quantity of food and drink provided on these occasions depends upon the means of the hosts, but Tafoor says the following is an average amount per person:

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

bowstring; and a little pouch, containing aconite poison and a few common implements, is suspended to his girdle. A hat he seldom wears, and when he does, it is often extravagantly broad and flat-brimmed, with a small hemispherical crown. It is made of leaves of *Scitamineæ*, between two thin plates of bamboo-work, clumsy and heavy; this is generally used in the rainy weather, while in the dry a conical one is worn, also of platted slips of bamboo, with broad flakes of talc between the layers, and a peacock's feather at the side. The umbrella consists of a large hood, much like the ancient boat called a coracle, which being placed over the head reaches to the thighs behind. It is made of platted bamboo, enclosing broad leaves of *Phrynium*. A group of Lepchas with these on, running along in the pelting rain, are very droll figures; they look like snails with their shells on their backs. All the Lepchas are fond of ornaments, wearing silver hoops in their ears, necklaces made of cornelian, amber, and turquoise, brought from Tibet, and pearls and corals from the south, with curious silver and golden charm-boxes or amulets attached to their necks or arms. These are of Tibetan workmanship, and often of great value: they contain little idols, charms and written prayers, or the bones, hair, or nail-parings of a Lama: some are of great beauty, and highly ornamented. In these decorations, and in their hair, they take some pride, the ladies frequently dressing the latter for the gentlemen: thus one may often see, the last thing at night, a damsel of discreet port, demurely go behind a young man, unplait his pig-tail, tease the hair, thin it of some of its lively inmates, braid it up for him, and retire. The women always wear two braided pig-tails, and it is by this they are most readily distinguished from their effeminate-looking partners, who wear only one.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

incense, and dry twigs from the cypress tree. In front of the little table is a winnower on which parts of the animal sacrifices are arranged in the following manner: opposite the vessel is the skull turned towards the table. Behind it are the entrails. To the left of the skull is a hind leg, to the front is a foreleg. Between the foreleg and the entrails is a thigh with a little meat. When everything is arranged, the teacher sits behind the table a little to the left, in front of the scarf. His pupil sits on his right. Then he lays the scarf on the pupil's hand and recites the prayers, which the apprentice repeats after him sentence by sentence. Then the master makes a ceremonial speech to the initiated in which he explains: 'Now the price for the freeing of your body is paid to the demon, but under one condition, that you consecrate your life to the Mun-god, and that you offer up your body as his dwelling place.' After this speech he hands the vessel filled with the chi to his pupil so that he can drink from it three times from three different places. This drinking of the chi from the vessel garnished with butter stands for the actual ritual consecration. With this the pupil is bound for three years to study with his master. At the end of the instruction, a second sacrifice of a bullock is performed. With this the pupil is given full powers and can function independently.

The most important sacrificial offering for all these ceremonies is the bullock. An ox is desirable. If a pig is given the neophite will be unable to expel Lom-doon-moong (the devil of Jaundice). If a goat, he will be unable to expel Mat-moong, (the devil who produces various unpleasant symptoms which are the results of ancestral quarrels)."[84]

According to our investigations, the Mun and the Bong-thing are both equally powerful magicians. They only, can expel demons and appease the gods through sacrifice. Both, men as well as women, can be Mun. The Mun spirit is not a female spirit but can choose either men or women as its servants. The Bong-thing can only be a man. The Mun and the Bong-thing whom we were able to observe, do not wear any special ceremonial dress or ornaments during their activities, neither do they use the double skull-drum (damaru)

84. op. cit. p. 479.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

nor the big flat round Shaman-drum (rnga). For the sacrifice they do not use either the magic dagger (phur-bu) or the thunderbolt (rdo-rje), nor conch trumpets (dung), nor flutes made from human thigh bones (rkang-gling), nor the trident, nor the cup of the human skull (thod-pa). All the above mentioned articles are however indispensable to the Tibetan magicians, the Inner Asiatic and the Siberian Shamans. It is therefore evident, that the Mun and the Bong-thing cannot be identical with the Tibetan Bon-po as some scholars state. They belong rather to that primitive priest class, which has not been influenced by the typical Shamanism which operated in Tibet and spread from there to some Himalayan districts, to Inner and East Asia. The Mun and the Bong-thing are not allowed to practise any black magic as such. This is attributed to them by the neighbouring people, who consequently fear them greatly. During our investigations on this subject we repeatedly heard it said, "Only a wicked and demoralised Mun and Bong-thing would use his powers to harm another person, for their vocation is precisely to help people and to warn off all harm." The Mun wears no prayer cord. When he has to make a prophecy, he calls to his spirit, who comes on to his shoulder and speaks through his mouth. The Bong-thing has a prayer string, which he uses when prophesying. This string however, differs from the Tibetan one and has no definite number of beads.

In the white magic practised by the Lepchas we found many parallels with the ancient Chinese white magic, which had not as yet been influenced by the typical Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There is something in common to both in the matter of casting out demons. The magician compels the demon to enter into a pot of blood. Once the demon is in, he closes the pot and buries it.[57] Their dances have certain characteristics in common with the Wu,—the ancient Chinese magicians. In everything we find the content of the ancient class of magic which was widely spread and which preceded the Inner Asiatic Shamanism. There it received later the typical shaping which today, under the name of Shamanism

57. cfr. Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, op. cit. p. 204 a.b.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

On the right side of this plate is an earthenware pot filled with water. The Bong-thing sits in front of the sacrifice with his back to the fire. Beside him is an assistant holding a brazier with incense. The incense consists of dried twigs from the cypress trees of Tibet. The Lepchas call the tree "dag-dŏl-gung." The priest takes in his right hand the "purifier" which is made out of three branches of Amliso, *i.e.* Po-chior. He then summons the god and when the branches move to and fro, it is a sign that the spirit has come. Now the Bong-thing begins the sacrificial prayer, "Sang so (incense is burnt); tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno! (Incense offering! Tibetan name—magic formula, praying it, holy water is to be sprinkled from the pitcher; it appears to be corrupt Tibeta tzab, which is the same as chab, signifying water.)

"To the star god, the Gun dŏ god, the sun god, the Sam yig god, the Sog god, the Gŏm shi god, the Gŏm yu god (I make) this offering of incense. The offering (I make) in the smoke of incense. Come hither O gods! Gold Torma and money Torma I offer in sacrifice. Come hither Ka to and Gon hiu. I offer in sacrifice. Spirit of the millet beer—and spirit of the rice offering come hither. The sacrifice is offered, the incense offering is made. tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno (magic formula). Goddess Amu mŏn mu, Ha mu, Mi lig mu, Miă song mu, Chu mu, Yuk mu, Se mu; son Chu go ri go chen chen, daughter-in-law Nyom mu, father and mother! [so]

60. sa hor rum bu gun dŏ rum bu sa dzug rum bu sam yig rum bu
(to the) star god, Gun dŏ god, sun god, Sam yig god,

sog rum bu gŏm shi rum bu gŏm yu rum bu sang blong ga
Sog god, Gŏm shi god, Gŏm yu god, offering of incense

pŏ blong ga! (incense is offered here) kŏg ma o! dyăr pa dong, gom pa
in smoke, incense offering, in smoke! come here! Gold Torma, money

dong dăn dong dăm dong hiu o! Ka to gon chiu blong ga! dzăn dong
Torma sacrifice! sacrifice! Ka to and Gon hiu come here! sacrifice,

hiu dăm dong hiu ma o. Chi log so log
sacrifice! Millet beer(spirit), rice offering (spirit)

blong ga dzăn dong hiu dăm dong hiu o! ŏn sang so! sang so!
come here! sacrifice! sacrifice! Incense offering, incense offering!

tza ni bu tza lo! tzab den bu geno! Amu mŏn mu, ha mu, mi lig mu,
(Magic formula while water is sprinkled) (All are names for the wife of

miă song mu, chu mu, yuk mu, se mu; chu go ri go chen chen bu
the God). (Name of the son of the Supreme God)

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

During the prayer, the one who performed the sacrifice added the expression "lang nam" in chosen places; it means "the year of the bull," because the sick person was born in the year of the bull. Lang is the Tibetan expression for the Zodiac bull. As the prayer ended, the assistant took some of the sacrificial meat, rice and chi and offered it to Me-sum-mung, the demon who represents the life-principle.

And so the sacrifice came to an end. The portions of meat were cleared away. The fore and hind legs and the valuable parts were given to the priest. The remainder of the meat, as also the skin, were sold in order to enable the family to make a little money. A very small portion of the meat was eaten immediately after the sacrifice. These sacrifices involve a heavy expenditure for the family; often many sacrifices are offered for the same illness if it is protracted, and this causes the ruin of many people. Hence many prefer to invite the lamaistic monks of the Brug-pa sect, because they are willing to drive out demons of illness at lesser expense.

A female Mun, Mai-li-mo-la-dza-ni, whose personal name is Chin-dün, and who lives near Git-biyong described a similar sacrificial ceremony to us which she holds at the ripening of the millet crop. The preparatory arrangements for the sacrifice are the same as mentioned above, with the following differences: There are only five Tormas for the five deities namely: Sa-dzug-rum, the sun god who is regarded as the Supreme Being, Ni-gung-mön, his wife, Ta-dik-köb, the son, Nyom, the daughter-in-law, and San-tug-kan-dro-mu. There are again two lamps, but five bamboo containers containing chi, five banana leaves with rice, five varieties of meat, and incense, and holy water containers. She is helped by her personal spirits who are Darmit, Dartik, Sang-mu, Dang-mu-rum, Asog-rum, Tzang-rum. The sacrifice progresses in the same sequence as above. This Mun was twenty years old when she fell ill with heart trouble. The Bong-thing A-du said to her, "You must become Mun." She was an apprentice to the female Mun Dja-ge-mo. In addition to her Mun belief, she also practises Lamaism, and has a little prayer wheel and prayer cord. We could not obtain the text of the prayers used in her sacrifice.